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Senate

The Senate met at 9:30 a.m. and was called to order by the Honorable TOM UDALL, a Senator from the State of New Mexico.

PRAYER

The Chaplain, Dr. Barry C. Black, offered the following prayer:

Let us pray.

Almighty God, eternal and unchangeable, we pray for this Nation, its people, and its institutions in these challenging times. If we have forsaken You, do not abandon us. If we have sinned, forgive us. If we have been mistaken, correct us. Lord, let Your grace be sufficient for all our needs. Lift the efforts of this body into the higher reaches of Your kingdom, guiding and strengthening our Senators in the discharge of their duties. Bless their work as You strengthen them by Your spirit to honor You.

We pray in Your great Name. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Honorable TOM UDALL led the Pledge of Allegiance, as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

APPOINTMENT OF ACTING PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will please read a communication to the Senate from the President pro tempore (Mr. BYRD).

The assistant legislative clerk read the following letter:

U.S. SENATE,
PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE,
Washington, DC, June 17, 2009.

To the Senate:

Under the provisions of rule I, paragraph 3, of the Standing Rules of the Senate, I hereby appoint the Honorable TOM UDALL, a Senator from the State of New Mexico, to perform the duties of the Chair.

ROBERT C. BYRD,
President pro tempore.

Mr. UDALL of New Mexico thereupon assumed the chair as Acting President pro tempore.

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The majority leader is recognized.

SCHEDULE

Mr. REID. Mr. President, following leader remarks, we will be in a period for the transaction of morning business for an hour. Senators will be allowed to speak for up to 10 minutes each. Republicans will control the first half and the majority will control the second 30 minutes. Following morning business, the Senate will resume consideration of the motion to proceed to the Travel Promotion Act postcloture. Following adoption of the motion to proceed to the travel bill later this afternoon, we will turn to the emergency supplemental appropriations conference report.

I am disappointed that we are again wasting time on a heavily bipartisan bill, the Travel Promotion Act, which has wide support by both the Democrats and Republicans. But the Republicans forced us to have a vote on cloture to allow us to get on the bill. All the Republicans voted for it. They are filibustering things they even agree with just to stall for time. This is 30 hours we could use to do a lot of good. I don't know what would be the rationale for wasting this time. Maybe they don't want President Obama to complete more legislation through us. It is beyond my ability to comprehend why we would waste this time.

It has been written and talked about that this is the most accomplished Congress since the first year of the Roosevelt administration. I don't have before me all the legislation we have done, but I am going to try to recall some of the things we have done.

We passed the lands bill, the most significant environmental legislation in more than a quarter of a century, creating more than 2 million acres of wilderness, 1,000 miles of scenic rivers, hundreds of miles of trails, and many other good things in this very important legislation.

We passed the Lilly Ledbetter legislation equalizing pay between men and women.

We passed the Children's Health Insurance Program which had been vetoed by President Bush on several occasions. Now more than 14 million children can go to the doctor when they are sick or hurt.

We passed the economic recovery package. Twenty-five percent of that money is out. The rest is coming.

We passed the omnibus spending bill—very important legislation which had been held up by the Bush administration. We spent \$1.2 trillion of the people's money within a period of 3 weeks. Why did we do that? We did it because Mark Zandi, among others, Senator MCCAIN's chief economic adviser, Republican economists, and Democratic economists told us we had to do this to stop a worldwide depression, and we have done that. As Chairman Bernanke said, the crops have been planted and the shoots are now appearing out of the ground.

We went on to pass a procurement bill—extremely important—to rein in the excessive expenses of what has taken place in years past with the Pentagon, overspending money we give them; that is, something is supposed to cost this much and winds up costing twice as much.

We were able to pass national service legislation, allowing 750,000 people in America to be involved in public service, dealing with the environment, health care, the poor. During the 7,000 hours they volunteer, they get a small stipend. When they finish, they get an amount of money to help with their college education.

● This "bullet" symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.



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